(घ) स्वीकृत एक्सप्रैस हाइवेज के निर्माण और इस संबंध में अब तक प्राप्त उपलब्धियों का ब्यौरा क्या है?

जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री (श्री टी०जी० वेंकटरामन): (क) गुजरात राज्य में अहमदाबाद से बड़ोदरा तक केवल एक ही एक्सप्रैस मार्ग के निर्माण के लिए अनुमोदन दिया गया है।

(ख) वर्ष 1996-97 में इस एक्सप्रैस मार्ग के लिए 10 करोड़ रु० का प्रावधान है।

(ग) इस एक्सप्रैस मार्ग के निर्माण की अनुमानित लागत लगभग 4.29 करोड़ रु० प्रति किलोमीटर है।

(घ) इस एक्सप्रैस मार्ग के निर्माण के लिए जून, 1986 में अनुमोदन दिया गया था। लगभग 49% सड़क कार्य और 72% पुल कार्य अब तक पूरे कर लिए गए हैं।

Proposal to Enact a Law Banning the Sale of Lottery Tickets

1716. SHRI OP. KOHL1: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rajasthan High Court had observed that Government should consider enacting a law banning the sale of lottery tickets throughout the country, since this is a social evil;

(b) if so, whether Government had also observed that it is not desirable that the revenue should be raised by encouraging gambling and immorality in society;

(c) if so, whether the Government propose to enact a law banning the sale of lottery tickets throughout the country; and

(d) if not. the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Though the Central Government docs not conduct any lottery of its own, it has, over a period of time, sent guidelines to the State Governments for regulating the lottery trade. It is essentially for the State Governments to improve the monitoring and implementation of laws pertaining to the conduct of lotteries, gambling, etc. and to modify the laws depending on their impact on the socio-economic life of the people. In this context, it was felt that as the Supreme Court had already by an interim order on 21.4.1994 regulated the lottery trade considerably, its final judgement may. be awaited before considering enactment of a legislation.

Formation of Indian Ocean Trade Zone

1717. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the suggestion of ASSOCHAM that a study be undertaken on the formation of special trade zone comprising countries in the Indian Ocean zone; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government is positively inclined to consider suggestions for cooperation among the Indian Ocean Rim countries, including in the area of trade. There arc ongoing contacts to explore the possibility and scope of such cooperation.

India participated in the first International Meeting of Experts from seven Indian Ocean Rim Countries (viz. Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman. Singapore and South Africa) convened by Mauritius in March, 1995. The meeting agreed on the principles, objectives and direction of the future action programme of an Indian Ocean Rim association for regional cooperation to promote cooperation in trade, investment, science and technology, tourism and human resource

development. Two Working Group meetings have been held in Mauritius in August 1995 and May, 1996 for preparing a Charter and a Work Programme/ Action Plan for cooperation, which have brought the process forward.

सिंचाई परियोजनाओं के लिए निर्धारित धनराशि का उपयोग न किया जाना

1718. **श्री अजीत जोगी:** क्या जल संसाधन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) गत तीन वर्षों के दौरान किन-किन सिंचाई परियोजनाओं के लिए धनराशि आवंटित की गई, किन्तु उसका उपयोग नहीं किया गया; और

(ख) इस प्रकार अवांटित धनराशि में से कितनी राशि वास्तव में उपयोग में नहीं लायी गई?

जल संसाधन मंत्री (श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र): (क) और (ख) सिंचाई राज्य का विषय होने के कारण सिंचाई परियोजनाओं के लिए अन्वेषण, उनका निरूपण, क्रियान्वयन और निधियों के आबंटन का उत्तरदायित्व राज्य सरकारों का है। केन्द्रीय सहायता ब्लाक ऋणों और अनुदानों के रूप में दी जाती है और वह किसी परियोजना/कार्यक्रम से जुड़ी नहीं होती है। देश में 1993-94, 1994-95 एवं 1995-96 के दौरान वृहद एवं मध्यम सिंचाई परियोजनाओं संबंधी परिव्यय एवं व्यय निम्नानुसार है:-

वर्ष	परिव्यय	व्यय
		(करोड़ रुपये)
1993-94	3840.90	3369.30
1994-95	4284.96	3597.58
1995-96	5045.98	(संशोधित अनुमोदित परिव्यय) उपलब्ध नहीं.

Shortage of Cable Line in Silchar (Assam)

1719. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that because of the shortage of cable lines Department of Telecommunications in Silchar (Assam) is not able to give connections to hundreds of prospective subscribers, and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to solve this problem ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) and (b) Cables are being laid so that telephone connections are given to waiting subscribers.

Closure of Jute Mills

1720. SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of jute mills have been closed down during the last one year; if so, the number thereof;

(b) the number of workers rendered unemployed as a result thereof; and

(c) the steps Government have taken propose to take to revive the jute industry?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) and (b) Due to short crop and consequently of mis-match between supply and demand there was an abnormal increase in prices of raw jute during 1995-96, adversely affecting the functioning of jute mills. During the Jute year 1995-96, 14 mills closed down, affecting 53307 workers.

(c) The Government has take measures aimed at encouraging modernisation of jute mills as also development of value added jute diversified products to promote newer uses of the fibre.